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TRADE UNIONISM IN THE UNITED STATES

THE ESSENCE OF UNIONISM AND THE INTERPRETATION OF UNION TYPES

In the preceding paper, on the general character and types of trade unionism,¹ two leading propositions were advanced as working hypotheses for the interpretation of the facts: first, that unionism is not a unified, consistent entity; secondly, that what is called unionism is in reality the manifold expression of a series of distinct and essentially contradictory types and varieties. Such types and varieties were distinguished tentatively with respect to both structure and function, and the leading representatives in each division were briefly characterized as they appear to exist in the United States today. Thus, structurally, the union complex was analyzed into six main forms of organization, each represented by a series of territorial and sometimes industrial units; viz., the *craft union*, the *trades union*, the *compound craft union*, the *quasi-industrial union*, the *industrial union*, and the *labor union*. Functionally, the attempt was made to distinguish four main types and four subordinate varieties; viz., *business unionism*, *uplift unionism*, *revolutionary unionism*, and *predatory unionism* as types;² *socialistic* and *quasi-anarchistic unionism* as varieties of the revolutionary type, *hold-up* and *guerrilla unionism* as variants of the predatory type.

This discussion of the general character and types of unionism was professedly tentative and suggestive. At its close the writer admitted that strong objections might apparently be urged against the hypotheses advanced. Therefore, in view of their supreme importance in connection with the whole interpretation of unionism, our judgments of it, and any practical proposals with regard to it, the promise was made to subject their validity at once to the inductive or historical test. Specifically stated, this requires us, if our hypotheses are to be maintained, to prove by reference to undisputed facts, past and present, that these union types do exist as

¹ *Journal of Political Economy*, XXII, 201 (March, 1914).

² A possible fifth type was also suggested, viz., *dependent unionism*.

described, and that their nature and relationships are such as to allow of no escape from the conclusion that unionism is essentially a series of independent group manifestations which from the practical standpoint cannot be interpreted, evaluated, and judged as a simple consistent whole or as a succession of more or less accidental and temporary variations from a single normal type.

At first blush the process of proof here required appears to be very simple. It would seem necessary merely to furnish undisputed evidence of the existence, past and present, of unions or union groups possessing the characteristics of these assumed types. A moment's thought, however, makes it clear that something other than this is required to prove that unionism is in reality non-unitary in character. For it is evident that the mere successive existence of such variations in the past might in itself indicate only adaptations of one and the same unionism to a changing environment, while their present existence alone might be evidence either of survivals of past adaptations destined shortly to disappear or of merely temporary aberrations from the normal. In either case, if nothing more were adduced it would be possible still to regard unionism as a single definite entity, since successive adaptations of a species to alterations in environment do not necessarily destroy its identity, nor do concurrent variations, unless these become permanently established as conflicting or rival forms.

What, then, are the real tests or criteria of distinct union types, and what is the process of proof necessary to establish their existence? It is evident that to answer this question with assurance, and therefore to remove all doubt in regard to the mode of procedure here demanded, a more thorough understanding is required of the nature and interdependence of these union variants which we have described. This involves a positive interpretation of unionism in terms of its general functional and structural character and relationships. Let us then attempt to indicate clearly the essential quality and conditions of existence of this combination of function and structure called unionism.

Students in general have approached unionism on the structural side, and have treated it as though the union were essentially an

organic unit with certain functional attributes; and hitherto we have spoken of the functional and structural forms as though they were independent and co-ordinate expressions of unionism. Both of these attitudes are untenable. From the standpoint of motives and ends, as well as from that of its character and significance as a social problem, the real unionism—its primary and essential expression—is functional. The structural form is altogether secondary and dependent. This will be made evident by a brief analysis of the motives which actuate prospective unionists and the manner and purposes for which the union is brought into being.

What concerns men primarily in their social relationships as ends to be striven for is not forms of organization but standards of living—using this phrase to cover not merely the narrow economic aspect of life but social standards generally, including moral and judicial as well as material conditions, rights, and privileges. As social beings we are all concerned primarily with the problem of living as presented by these conditions and standards; and our attention is focused on the solution of this problem in terms of our particular needs and the peculiar circumstances which we have to face and overcome. In our efforts to comprehend and solve this problem each of us develops more or less completely and systematically an interpretation of life—an explanation of things as they are in terms of the conditions and relationships of which we are conscious and the forces which determine these. And along with this interpretation there tends to grow up in the mind of each some plan or scheme for the modification or complete alteration of the situation in the furtherance of his special ideals or interests.

The wage-worker is no exception in respect to all this. His hopes and fears center primarily about such matters as employment, wages and hours, conditions of work, modes of remuneration—in short, the most vital concerns which immediately touch his present and future well-being—and the economic, ethical, and juridical conditions, standards, and forces that practically determine these matters; and his mind focuses on the problem of living as presented in these terms. In his attempt to comprehend and solve this problem he also develops some sort of social viewpoint—an interpretation of the social situation as viewed from the standpoint of his peculiar experiences and needs—and a set of beliefs

concerning what should and can be done to better the situation, especially as it bears upon the conditions of living which he faces.¹

The scope and character of this viewpoint and the mode of its development in the mind of the worker varies with the individual. If he is by nature and training thoughtful and independent, he may work out his own conclusions, subject of course to the unconscious influence of the general body of opinion about him, and his interpretation and solution may cover the widest range, including not only the immediate economic conditions and relationships which confront him, but the ethical and legal foundations upon which these rest. One indeed frequently encounters workmen who have thus possessed themselves of a complete and often esoteric social philosophy.

If, on the other hand, the individual worker is intellectually untrained and sluggish, his view is likely to be relatively narrow, concerned mainly with his own immediate conditions and relationships, and taken over bodily from the current opinion of his associates. In such cases he is likely to reflect merely the opinions of some stronger or more expansive personality who has constituted himself a leader. But whatever its range or quality, and however it may have been acquired, each worker possesses and is guided by some sort of social philosophy rooted in his peculiar temperament and in his immediate experiences and relationships.

It is evident that under these circumstances workers similarly situated economically and socially, closely associated and not too divergent in temperament and training, will tend to develop a

¹ The statement in the text does not of course attempt to carry the analysis back to its ultimate basis. To quote a comment by Professor George H. Mead: "This process is fundamentally a process of the coming to a new self-consciousness on the part of the laborer in the changing industrial conditions in which he finds himself. It is a great mistake to identify this fundamental impulse with the occasions which give it expression. The individual laborer can become conscious of himself only in so far as he realizes himself in the common attitude of the group over against the employing class or another group of workers, and the whole history of the development of society has shown that this negative attitude must precede any consciousness of common interests which bind this group to others in society. The trade union is then one step in the process of socializing the laborers brought about under the modern process of industry, and goes through the same stages through which the community itself has passed in advancing from hostile groups into a conscious organization of diverse but interacting elements of society."

common interpretation of the social situation and a common solution of the problem of living. This may come about gradually and spontaneously, or it may be the apparently sudden outcome of some crisis in the lives of the men concerned. It may, for example, result immediately from some alteration for the worse in the conditions of living, or an interference with what are considered established rights and modes of action, of which cases in point would be wholesale discharges from employment or the discharge of favorite individuals, a lowering of the wage rate, the requirement of more onerous or more dangerous conditions of work, a sudden rise in the prices of necessities, some police action or legal decision which touches the workers on the raw with respect to modes of action or their assumed dignity and rights as men. Or this crystallization of sentiment may come about as the result of the appearance from without or the rise from within the group of a purposeful agitator and leader—a man whose personality or position commands attention, who is capable of putting into general form the discontents of the individuals and offering a positive solution of their difficulties. But whatever the immediate cause, the result is the same. A social group is thus constituted, marked off by a more or less unified and well-developed but effective viewpoint or group psychology.

As soon as this state of affairs has been reached group action is a natural consequence. Those whose interpretations of the situation and solutions of the problem are sufficiently alike to make co-operation apparently possible, spontaneously or under purposeful leadership band themselves together for common effort and mutual assistance. They come together thus, not primarily to establish and vindicate a form of organization—the organization is merely means to end—but to establish and maintain certain conditions of living—to put through a remedial program based on their common interpretation of the social situation viewed from the standpoint of their immediate conditions and needs.

Thus the union comes into existence.¹ It goes back in its genesis ultimately to the common needs and problems of the wage-workers;

¹ Unionism then is not a thing which exists only among wage-workers. In its broadest sense it may be as pervasive as social grouping. It may exist wherever in society there is a group of men with consciousness of common needs and interests apart from the rest of society. What distinguishes *trade unionism* from other forms is that

it arises immediately out of the consciousness of the common or group character of those needs and problems; it exists for common action looking to the betterment of the living-conditions; it appears primarily as a group interpretation of the social situation in which the workers find themselves, and a remedial program in the form of aims, policies, and methods; the organization and the specific form or structure which it takes are merely the instruments which the group adopts for propagating its viewpoint and putting its program into effect. In short, looking at it from the standpoint of motives and ends, as well as from that of its character as a social problem, the heart and core of the thing—its essential aspect or expression—is functional. Its structural or organic expression is secondary and dependent.¹

it expresses the viewpoint and interpretation of groups of wage-workers. As a matter of fact we have no lack of unions of employers, unions of merchants, unions of farmers, and unions of professional men. The curious thing is that men who themselves are members of one sort of union, in so many cases cannot be made to believe that unions of another sort are anything but unnatural and vicious products.

¹ In practice and specifically, the genesis of unions is of course a matter of much variation, and the actual order of events is not always as stated in the text. Spasmodic action often precedes organization, and organization frequently antedates any general or rationalized formulation of viewpoint, interpretation, and program. Frequently blind and spasmodic revolt against some particular grievance or condition is the first objective step in the formation of a union. This revolt may be brought about by the personal influence of one or a few men, and the crowd may act more as the result of imitation or emotion than from clear consciousness of a common viewpoint and problem; after which a paid organizer appears and attempts to teach the workers or a select number the union viewpoint and program, and to effect a permanent organization. But even in such cases some consciousness of common needs and problems has preceded action and organization, and unless the conditions are present for the development of a common viewpoint, interpretation, and program, and, further, unless the organization is adapted to make these effective, it will not work. Unless these elements are present some organization may indeed be created, but it will soon disintegrate. This accounts, indeed, for the great proportion of unions that prove altogether ephemeral. They are based on the temporary existence of special and exceptional circumstances, or are the work of one or two men whose special influence has for the time created the semblance of a group psychology among a body of men incapable of continuous common thought and action. Under these circumstances, as soon as the special exigency is past, or the special leadership withdrawn, the group is bound to break up. In other words, the native consciousness in the group membership of actually existing common needs and problems is primal. Without it and without adaptation to it no organization can long exist and function. In the most vital sense, then, the statement in the text represents the true genesis of the union and the true relation of its functional and structural expressions.

If, then, functional and structural types of trade unionism exist, we have here the most definite indications of what must be their nature and relationships. Assuming their existence, the functional type is simply a specific case of group psychology. It is a social interpretation and remedial program held by a group of wage-workers. Obviously there may be as many of these functional types as there are groups of workers with vitally different social viewpoints and plans of action. The structural type, on the other hand, is simply one of the organic methods by means of which the functional types seek to maintain discipline among their members and to put into effect their programs of action. Evidently there may be as many structural types as there are distinct organic modes of combination effective for these purposes. The functional type *is* unionism of a certain species. The structural type is one organic form in which it may clothe itself. In other words, the structural type is related to the functional type somewhat as government is related to the nation. It is altogether a subordinate and dependent manifestation.

But do such types exist? So far as concerns structural types, this has been generally conceded. What can we say, then, in regard to the functional aspect of the case? Let us carry the analysis a step farther. It is evident that, once the viewpoint stated above is comprehended and accepted, we should look for distinct and conflicting varieties of unionism, functionally speaking. We should expect these to appear wherever and whenever there exist groups of workers with well-defined and conflicting social viewpoints. Moreover, we should expect to find them existing not only in succession but concurrently, and not only in different industries but among the workers in the same industry and even in the same craft. For as soon as we concede that the union is in essence an expression of group psychology we realize that it will get its specific character not merely from environmental conditions but from these in conjunction with the temperamental characteristics of the workers concerned, and that consequently union variants are likely to appear with a variation in either of these factors. In short, we should expect to find concurrent functional variation and conflict to be among the chief features of contemporary unionism in a

country like our own, with its diversity of environmental conditions and its richness of racial and temperamental contrasts.

And the facts amply confirm the deduction: not only does the student of American unionism encounter different union groups in different industries with widely varying viewpoints and interpretations, but different unions with varying aims, policies, and methods contending for the domination of the same industry. And nothing is more characteristic of the situation than the descent of this form of conflict into the particular union where rival groups or factions struggle for the control of the organization in the interests of conflicting interpretations and programs. The bitterness of these contests and their continuance over long periods and under different sets of leaders leaves no doubt that they spring, in part at least, from the existence of irreconcilable viewpoints.¹

Conflicting functional variants then certainly do exist in the union complex. But are these variants union types in the sense

¹ As illustrations of the statement in the text the following specific cases of union conflict based mainly on differences of viewpoint and program may be cited: In the eighties and early nineties the American Federation of Labor, claiming to represent in general what we have called business unionism, was engaged in a struggle for supremacy with the Knights of Labor, the assumed proponent of idealistic uplift unionism, and since 1905 the American Federation has had to encounter the bitter opposition of the quasi-anarchistic Industrial Workers of the World. During the most of this time the control of the Federation has been more or less seriously threatened by the socialistic unionists working within the organization. The I.W.W. has been in a chronic state of internal conflict since its establishment in 1905. In 1908 it split into two irreconcilable factions resulting in the formation of a socialistic I.W.W. (the Detroit I.W.W.) which has since maintained a separate existence. At the present moment the older organization is in most serious straits due to internal dissensions. Serious contests over general policy are not infrequent in state and city central units of the American Federation of Labor. A notable example is the case of the Chicago Federation of Labor, the control of which some years since was threatened by the violent efforts and the drastic measures of a predatory group ruled by "Skinny Madden," and which has been almost constantly harassed by the efforts of the socialistic unionists to force upon it their viewpoint and policies. Contests within national and local unions between rival factions representing conflicting union varieties find well-known recent examples in the cases of the United Mine Workers, the Electrical Workers, the Association of Machinists, the Painters, Decorators, and Paperhangers, the Bakery and Confectionery Workers, the Carpenters and Joiners—to name only a few of many. Contests between national unions for control of the trade or industry find current examples in the struggle between the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen and the Switchmen's Union of North America, and between the two unions in the boot- and shoemaking industry.

that they preclude the assumption of a single consistent unionism at bottom? This is the question for practical proof. In order to clear the ground for direct consideration of this question, one more point in the general interpretation of unionism demands consideration.

If the validity of the preceding analysis be conceded, it is evident that the orthodox causal and historical interpretation of unionism must be abandoned or thoroughly revised. It has been the habit of students to look upon trade unionism as fundamentally an economic manifestation and to interpret it almost exclusively, or at least primarily, in terms of industrial or economic factors. Thus one school would explain unionism in terms of the development of the process of production in its narrow sense, making of it a succession of organic adaptations to the conditions and needs of the workers produced immediately by the successive types or units of capitalistic enterprise, e.g., the small craft unit, the industrial unit, and the enlarged industrial unit or trust. Unionism thus appears ultimately as the organic corollary of the form of the tool or machine. Another school insists that unionism is to be explained primarily in terms of the development of markets and the character and scope of market competition, endeavoring to show that the different forms of unionism correspond naturally to the conditions existing in conjunction with the customs market, the retail competitive market, and the wholesale market. Here transportation is perhaps the most potent underlying determinant. It is not denied that other factors have a formative influence, especially, for example, the presence or absence of free land, the political ideals and situation, and the state of public education. But these factors are looked upon as modifiers. Environment is practically the sole, and economic environment the chief, formative force, and unionism is again regarded as a series of successive adaptations of one and the same thing to the changing environmental conditions.

These attempts at explanation simply or mainly in industrial or economic terms result largely from the habit of regarding unionism primarily as an organic phenomenon and thus centering the attention on structural forms and changes, and are the chief cause for failure to recognize the possible non-unitary character of union-

ism. For as soon as we discard the older mode of approach and look at unionism as primarily functional in character, the appearance of orderly succession vanishes, and the simple modes of interpretation described above are seen to be altogether inadequate to account for the facts. We have then to explain chiefly the existence of contradictory group interpretations and programs which succeed each other apparently in no order accountable for by changes in the economic situation, and which appear, as we have pointed out, not only consecutively in conjunction with different systems of production and marketing, but concurrently, and not merely in the same general industrial and social *milieu*, but among workers in the same trade and even in the same union.

Evidently functional variations thus existing and persisting cannot be explained in economic or even in environmental terms alone. They can be accounted for only on the supposition that primary forces besides the industrial and environmental are vitally responsible for their genesis and being. In short, an interpretation of unionism, not in monistic, but in dualistic or pluralistic terms is required.

What then conceivably are these relatively permanent, non-industrial factors which enter into the determination of the primary or functional character of unionism? Since these diverse viewpoints and interpretations which make up unionism are obviously specific cases of group or social psychology, we have merely to inquire what are the determining factors of the psychology of social groups. This query the social psychologist stands ready to answer with considerable assurance. He assures us that one of these factors is environment—not economic environment merely, but political, social, and traditional as well, in the sense of the whole body of transmitted sentiments, ideas, and precepts—moral, religious, and customary. But he assures us also that over against environment as thus broadly interpreted is another factor, perhaps equally potent and certainly more permanent. This is the subjective factor. It includes temperament and aptitudes, both personal and racial, which show themselves as between different races and individuals in relatively permanent and conflicting feelings, ideals, and attitudes. It is these temperamental differences plus environmental influences that at any moment cause

individuals to differ in respect to what is good and bad, right and wrong, just and unjust; which mold and color their social interpretations, and thus, through the primal forces of association, bring about psychological groups with diverse and conflicting viewpoints and programs of action.¹ We may then reasonably conclude that the existence of concurrent and conflicting functional variants is to be explained as the outcome of different combinations of all these relatively permanent forces that affect the psychology of group membership, both environmental and subjective or temperamental, and since the functional aspect of unionism is its primary and essential expression it also is to be explained causally and historically in the same terms.²

With this general interpretation of unionism in hand we are now in a position to comprehend the nature of the problem involved in the assumption that unionism is at bottom non-unitary, and to state clearly and specifically the character and methods of proof which are required to validate this assumption. The problem is one which evidently concerns primarily the existence and character of functional union types. We shall therefore consider this aspect of the matter first, postponing for the present the discussion of structural types and their relation to the main issue.

We have seen that functional union variants do exist. What then must be proved with respect to them in order to establish the main contention? It would follow from all that has been said that the real tests of the validity of these variants as types are *concurrent existence as rival forms* of unionism and *relative permanence or stability* as such. Only in so far as they stand these tests can we be sure that they are more than successive adaptations of one and the same unionism to changing environment, or more than temporary and accidental variations from a single union norm; and

¹ See C. H. Cooley, *Social Organization*; W. G. Sumner, *Folkways*; W. I. Thomas, "Race Psychology," *American Journal of Sociology*, XVII, 725-75; G. Tarde, *The Laws of Imitation*.

² This insistence on a dualistic interpretation of unionism is not necessarily out of harmony with a belief in philosophical monism or even with adherence to the "economic interpretation of history." It implies nothing in regard to the ultimate determinants of racial and temperamental differences. It takes them simply as fixed data for the present and recent situation.

only in so far can we assert that unionism is not after all an essentially consistent though developing whole.

But the question at once arises: Just what is implied specifically in the terms "rival forms or expressions" and "relative permanence or stability"? In order to constitute a type must there be a perfectly defined and completely isolated union variant, exactly objectified in a formal organization which has existed from the initial genesis of unionism, or will less rigid requirements suffice?

Certainly it must be shown that these functional variants exist at the same time among the wage-workers as consciously formulated and essentially conflicting social interpretations with special regard to the needs and problems of the workers and the best methods of arriving at their solution; and that these conflicting interpretations, once established, persist and, so far as we can see, do not tend to revert or to develop into some one of the interpretations or into a single common interpretation.

On the other hand, at least three apparent qualifications of these conditions are possible without destroying the practical reality and significance of distinct functional types. In the first place, no specific degree of scope and generality with respect to the group interpretation and program is essential. These may be exceedingly narrow, concerned merely with the immediate economic conditions, relationships, and standards of living of the workers involved; that is, they may comprehend simply a set of more or less co-ordinated assumptions in regard to the rights of the men with respect to wages, hours, and conditions of employment, the mode of determining these, and the methods to be used in securing reasonable terms with the employer and enforcing them. Or the group interpretation may constitute a complete, definite, and rationalized social philosophy, and the program may cover the whole field of economic, political, ethical, juridical, and social conditions and relationships of the workers. The only essential point is that the viewpoint and program, whatever their scope and character, shall command the adherence of the membership of the group so as to constitute an effective motive and guide to group action. If this condition is met the type exists. The interpretation may be what it will; the question is: Does it work as a unifying and dynamic group force?

It is equally true, secondly and thirdly, that these functional types can exist and can in so far show the essential diversity and manifold character of unionism independent of any structural qualifications whatever and apart from the existence of actual union programs conforming exactly to them. For the functional type, it must not be forgotten, is a group viewpoint or interpretation and, provided it exists, persists, and its adherents strive to secure for it practical effectiveness and the structural means appropriate thereto, it is a union type, regardless of the structural form through which or with which it may be obliged to work, and regardless of the ability of its advocates to secure its exclusive objectification in the programs of any particular organizations.¹ It is not necessary, even, that different functional types should always find expression in different and conflicting union organizations. On the contrary, it is possible, and indeed it often happens, that the conflict between the functional types goes on within one and the same union organization, taking the form of a struggle for control between two or more factions holding to vitally different social viewpoints and interpretations. As a matter of fact this internal conflict is a characteristic feature of unions, and at any moment there is almost always some factional compromise and some practical admixture of functional type programs. Official union programs, therefore, rarely exist perfectly true to type. This is one reason why the multiple-type character of unionism has been generally overlooked. But this admixture in practice no more negates the fact and significance of union types than does the practical absence of pure democracy, unmixed oligarchy, or absolute despotism negate the varied type and character of government, nor does the fact that most capitalistic incomes are mixed negate or destroy the significance of the truth that social income, aside from that which goes to wages, is divided into the essentially diverse income types—profits, interest,

¹ A good illustration of this statement is furnished by the American Syndicalist League. No one prepared to admit the existence of functional types at all would deny a place among them to revolutionary Syndicalism. Yet it is not the primary aim of the Syndicalist League to form separate union organizations with correct Syndicalist programs, but gradually to transform American unionism by the process of spiritual penetration. It advises all Syndicalists to join the unions of their trade and to agitate within the organization.

and rent—and that actual distribution is to be so far interpreted in terms of these types and their fundamental determinants.¹

If there is any doubt in regard to the aptness of these analogies, let us put the case in the worst possible light for our contention, and then deal with it on its own merits. We have from the first insisted that unionism is what it is, and must be interpreted as we find it. But if there is no exact correlation between functional and structural types, and if actual union programs rarely occur type pure, how then can these functional types be the effective guides to union action or true clues to the interpretation of actual unionism? The answer is to be found in the pragmatic and dynamic character of unionism. It is not a made-to-order and finished product, but is in a constant state of flux and development. For the most part it changes, not by the process of creations *de novo*, but by the slow transformation of existing programs and structure. Unionism as it is, then, is not a set of fixed forms and programs, but is a developing process, and it is just this process of change and transition that the student must chiefly consider if he is to understand and interpret the phenomenon.

But what is the real nature of this process of change? No one who has made a careful study of unionism can doubt that it is a matter of practical adaptation to the existing relative strength or of continuous readjustment to the shifting of balance of power between contending groups and factions. New conditions arise, creating new problems which must be faced and solved. Each

¹ Neither is the existence and significance of union types negated by the fact that in times of serious crises unionists and unions of one type are likely to rally temporarily to the support of those of another, nor by the further fact that within unions bodies of men are found who act now with one and now with another faction. The first case finds its analogy in war between nations, when for the time being partisans of all types of government unite against foreign aggression. The second case illustrates the force of personality and imitation in the determination of social grouping. In the unions there are a few men of strong personality and decided opinions. There are more of an imitative disposition who get their opinions from others. The former in their positive interpretations and programs represent and maintain the distinct and conflicting union types. The latter are followers who sometimes shift in their allegiance from leader to leader and thus from type to type, with changes in associations and conditions. This fact does not negate the existence of the types, but throws light rather on the conditions which determine the outcome of contests between factions representing types.

group has its solution based on its own general viewpoint and interpretation. The actual resultant in terms of the union program and structure will reflect the relative power of the groups. Or new members are admitted, and, the personnel having changed, a new balance of power between factions is established. Soon this new balance will be reflected in the official policies, methods, attitudes, and perhaps structural features, of the union. Thus, while the types persist, the actual union program and methods change and develop. It is then evidently in terms of the interpretations and programs of these conflicting groups, i.e., in terms of the types and their causes, that we are to find the clues to the interpretation of unionism as it actually exists and is becoming.

And just because unionists are in the main pragmatic in their outlook we should not expect, except rarely, to find actual union programs and union structures existing type pure. Nor should we ordinarily expect any definite correlation in practice between functional and structural types. Doubtless such a correlation naturally exists to a considerable extent, certain structural arrangements being naturally adapted to the carrying-out of certain group programs. But ordinarily while there is hope of a gradual transformation toward the desired type its adherents will remain in the union. It is only when one faction gives up hope of working its will from within that it will withdraw and set up a new organization, and it is only, therefore, under such circumstances that we ordinarily find an exact correspondence between the actual union programs and structures and the pure types. We may safely conclude, then, that the absence of exact correlation between structural and functional types in practice, and between the latter and actual union programs, does not militate against the reality of distinct and persisting functional types and their practical significance.

Turning now to the matter of structural types, it is evident that the problem before us assumes a very different and much less important aspect. Distinct structural types do exist, as is generally admitted, but neither are they always rival forms nor is there always absence among them of developmental mutability. It does seem to be rather characteristic of the existence of these types that

their several advocates should be in actual conflict in the endeavor to displace one by another; but, on the other hand, they are often found in quite harmonious and supplemental relationship in the same organic group, each appearing to meet a different practical need. A well-recognized case in point is the existence and relationship within the general organization of the American Federation of Labor of craft and trades unions. Nor do these distinct structural types always appear to be quite independent in their genesis. This happens in some cases, but there seem to be clear cases of developmental transition. Thus the compound craft union is sometimes a transformation of the craft union by the simple process of combination, and the industrial union seems often to be the outcome of a simple enlargement of the elements in the compound craft union.

If, then, structural types stood in the same relationship to our problem as functional types, and if, therefore, in order to establish the manifold character of unionism it were necessary to apply the same criteria to them with the same degree of stringency, there is no doubt that the case could not be maintained. Here we doubtless find the chief explanation for the fact that students have yielded so long and so generally to the popular assumption that unionism is at bottom one and the same thing, that union variants are but adaptations of a single norm to changing environment, or at most temporary and accidental aberrations from it.¹ This is the conviction with which the student of unionism would naturally, and indeed almost inevitably, be impressed if he entered upon the study primarily from the structural standpoint, and placed his emphasis upon structural forms and relationships. He would then see unionism beginning in the local craft organization as a response to the conditions created by the primitive type of capitalistic enterprise or to its corresponding market structure, and developing by a gradual transformation through larger units to more complex structural arrangements to meet conditions imposed primarily by economic evolution. And so long as he looked at the union

¹ The popular assumption seems to be in itself partly a matter of blind partisanship, partly a matter of tactical advantage, and partly a belief in things hoped for.

primarily as a structural entity, and thought of aims, policies, and activities as functions or means of the organic thing, he could adopt no other than the unitary or normalistic assumption.

If, however, the primary and essential union expression is functional, and if it is further true that functional variations may exist regardless of any structural qualifications whatever—the same functional variant making use of different structural forms without losing its identity or permanency, and, contrariwise, distinct and contradictory functional variants working through the same structural arrangements—it is evident that this appearance of things would be far from conclusive of the real character of unionism. Doubtless entire absence of distinct structural types would render impossible positive proof of the non-unitary character of unionism, but it is evident that the tests which need be applied to prove their existence in harmony with this hypothesis are not the same as in the case of the functional types. Absolute rivalry is not essential. It is sufficient if the modes of organization be vitally different in principle. In short, the tests of distinct structural types demanded by our hypothesis seem to be merely the contemporary and historical presence in the union complex of distinct and alternative forms of organization.

To recapitulate, then, briefly in regard to the nature of the problem involved in the assumption that unionism is non-unitary in character: It has been seen that this assumption is one which rests almost exclusively on the existence and persistence of functional union types. In order to prove the truth of the assumption beyond reasonable doubt, it must be shown that these functional types exist concurrently as conflicting or rival social interpretations and remedial programs, held and advocated by different groups of wage-workers; it must be shown that, once established, these rival viewpoints persist and exhibit no tendency as such to revert to a single or common viewpoint; but it is not necessary that they should be shown to attain any specific degree of scope or generality beyond what is necessary to command group adherence and effectively to guide group action, that they should be necessarily associated with any particular organic forms or structural types, that each should find practical expression exclusively in a different organization, or,

finally, that the program of any particular organization or group of organizations should at any moment conform exactly to any one of them. In the matter of structure it is necessary to show merely the existence of distinct and alternative forms of organization.

Such being the problem, what is the process of proof required? Evidently we have here a matter which must be dealt with historically. We must first determine which of these distinct union variants have had more than an ephemeral existence. So far as structural forms are concerned, this should be sufficient. In regard to those functional variants that have persisted, it must be proved that they have had their genesis in different combinations of relatively permanent factors both environmental and temperamental.

To be exhaustive, the proof doubtless should be both positive and negative. Negatively it should be established that where no concurrent and conflicting functional variants exist the environment of the workers entering into combination is essentially uniform and that the workers themselves, racially, temperamentally, and traditionally, are essentially homogeneous. Positively it should be proved that existing and historical concurrent conflicting variants owe their origin and persistence to vitally diverse combinations of environmental and subjective factors operating in connection with the groups concerned.

Perfectly complete and satisfactory proof of our fundamental hypothesis respecting the general character of unionism and union types in the United States would then demand the most searching study of our union history with special reference to the economic, political, traditional, and temperamental factors involved. It is not possible to secure complete proof in this wise, owing both to the paucity of well-authenticated historical material and to the enforced limits of a periodical series. We shall, however, attempt to assemble enough evidence of this character for the practical testing of our thesis and for significant generalizations in regard to the general character of union development in the United States.

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